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A BRIEF
SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT
ON THE PROMINENT FEATURES OF THE
ABRAHAMIC COVENANT,

SHOWING ITS CONNECTION WITH
The Christian Dispensation.

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“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
JOHN viii. 32.

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TO THE READER.

THIS essay has been written, not through sectarian bigotry, nor with a view to subserve denominational interests only, but in the honest belief that Bible truth would thereby be promoted. Sectarian feeling, further than revealed Truth dictates and justifies, is disclaimed. It is, therefore, in the sincere hope that such a work may contribute, in some degree, to the enlightenment of the reader upon a subject which may not have been fully understood, and to *vindicate* the injured, rather than commit the least act of aggression, and to *relieve* a certain class from an embarrassment upon the subject of Infant Baptism, that the following pages were penned.

The views here set forth have been derived from the study of the Holy Scrip-

tures only,—to which I have endeavored strictly to confine myself. My subject is one of *fact*, not *theory*,—of revelation, not fable. And if I have succeeded in presenting this great and interesting truth in its own proper light so clearly that “he who runs may read” and all who read may “understand,” I shall feel amply compensated for my labor; and to God shall be all the praise.

THE AUTHOR.

JEFFERSONTOWN, Ky., Aug. 22, 1859.

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THE
ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

CHAPTER I.

GOD'S METHOD OF SALVATION.

Jehovah's method of introducing and perpetuating his church, seen in the call of Abraham, his own circumcision, and the circumcision of his infant offspring.

THE covenant established with Abraham embraced the *world*. "The promise that he should be ~~the~~ *heir of the world* was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law; but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. iv. 13.)

He is styled, "the father of the faithful," *i.e.* of all believers.

This covenant is found in Gen. xvii. 9-14, in which God appointed circumcision "to be a token" thereof, requiring "every man-child to be circumcised on the eighth day," by which they were "marked" as the "peculiar people of the Lord." Thus was a nucleus formed, in the family of Abraham, of that society or church which was designed for universality. This is the *society of believers*, as saith St. Paul:—"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," (Gal. iii. 26;) and, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii. 29.

In perfect harmony with this world-wide system of grace, the seed of Abraham, Christ, commissioned his apostles to "go into all the world and preach

the gospel to every creature, saying, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark xvi. 15, 16.

The church was established that through the grace of God therein the world might be saved. Here "trees of righteousness" spring up, and "lambs skip upon the hills." The Saviour commanded Peter to "feed" these "lambs." They will ever be found in his church, unless illegally expelled; and for them ample provision has been made by the Great Shepherd.

There is but one church of God. Abraham was a member of that church; and so were all believing Jews. To it Christians also belong, and but for the want of faith, "Israel dispersed", would this day also still be found therein. It was not, therefore, a *new church* that Jesus Christ esta-

blished. It is true that Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, styles it "a new covenant,"* *i.e.* it is a new dispensation in comparison with the Mosaic ritual-service, "which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."† This system of "carnal ordinances" was introduced because of sin, "that it might appear sin till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." (Gal. iii. 19.) It pointed in a peculiarly forcible manner, through its bloody sacrifices, to the great Atonement for the sins of the world by Jesus Christ, and prepared the mind of the Jewish

* Compare Jer. xxxi. 31, 32 with Heb. viii. 8-10.

† Heb. ix. 10. For more on this subject the reader is referred to Schmucker's Pop. Theol. p. 256.

people for the full introduction of Christianity. "The law," said Paul, "was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. iii. 24.) In Hebrews, ninth chapter and tenth verse, the apostle calls Christianity "THE REFORMATION." This is literally true, because it restores the church to the position it occupied when "*Abraham believed God, and when faith was imputed or accounted to him for righteousness, (without the deeds of the law,) and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.*" Rom. iv. 3, 11.

Therefore, as faith constitutes us members of the church, and "without

faith it is impossible to please God," (Heb. xi. 6,) none can be saved out of the church, *i.e.* without faith, by which alone we can "come to God." Much has been said and written about "*the church.*" We sometimes hear the words "*the true church,*"—as though there could be a church that is not true. There never was but *one church.* By the word "church" is meant the congregation of the faithful who have preserved the true religion. All adverse religious establishments, by whatever name they may be designated, are "synagogues of Satan." Of this church Jehovah is the sole, universal Head. Its members are all those who worship God "in spirit and in truth, believing with all the heart unto righteousness." Christ, the "promised seed," is the object of this faith now, as he was in all the preceding dispensations. He is

“the way, the truth, and the life.”
No man cometh unto the Father and
liveth but by him; for out of Christ
“God is a consuming fire.”

CHAPTER II.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT AND THE
GOSPEL IDENTICAL.

SOME persons profess to doubt that the covenant established with Abraham has any reference to, or connection with, the gospel dispensation,—supposing that it had its entire fulfilment in the possession of Canaan by the Israelites. But how could that possession make Abraham “a blessing to all the families of the earth”? Could it be made apparent that the covenant embraced nothing more than the land of the Canaanites, the masterly argument of the great Apostle of the Gentiles in his Epistles to the

Romans and Galatians would be most effectually overthrown.

It is worthy of remark that patriarchal names are all significant. Before the covenant was confirmed to Abraham "that in his seed (which is Christ) all the families of the earth should be blessed," his name was Abram, which means "an exalted father;" but Abraham signifies "father of multitudes," in accordance with the meaning as given by Jehovah himself:—"Thy name shall be called Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee." (Gen. xvii. 5.) The apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. iv. 17, quotes this language as applicable to them, and as having its fulfilment in the offer of justification through faith to the Gentile world. Therefore that promise had not its fulfilment in the

possession of the land of Canaan, or in his being the natural father of many tribes of people, but in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, *i.e.* to Christianity.

In his Epistle to the Galatians, chap. iii. 7-9, St. Paul declares, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." In writing to the Romans, the same apostle said, "And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though

they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also : and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. . . . Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." (Rom. iv. 11-16.) Here he shows, as plainly as language can express it, that the inheritance

covenanted to Abraham was something more than had been or could be received through the law, "that it might be sure to all the seed," i.e. that the Gentiles might become fellow-heirs of the same inheritance with the Jews. This inheritance is the gospel, with all its hallowed institutions and blessings in fulness.

In Galatians iii. 14, we are informed that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*" This blessing of Abraham that should come upon the Gentiles is evidently the forgiveness of sins, or justification through faith in Jesus

Christ,—the faith which Abraham had previous to his circumcision being essentially the same faith which the Gentiles were required to exercise in the promises concerning the Messiah. No argument can be more conclusive upon the identity of the gospel and the Abrahamic covenant, since it is here plainly and positively declared that the “*blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ,*” *i.e.* through faith in Christ.

The law of Moses, though “holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good,” could not secure this justification; for it “was not promised to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” (Rom. iv. 13.) Believers are therefore justly styled “children of Abraham,” because they have the same faith and are entitled to the same inheritance.

They “look for the [same] city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” (Heb. xi. 10,)—which could not be true if nothing but the land of Canaan had been secured by this covenant; because that “seed who received,” and are still receiving, “the promise of the Spirit through faith,” look for a “better country, that is, an heavenly.”

Jesus Christ came “to confirm [fulfil] the promises made unto the fathers,” (Rom. xv. 8;) and “He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.” Luke i. 54, 55.

But to establish the identity of the church under the Old and New dispensations beyond the reach of all opposition, I need only refer to Romans, 11th chapter, where the apostle rep-

resents the church under the figure of a good olive-tree, from which the Jews by unbelief were broken off. He says, "If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, [the Gentile Romans,] being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, boast not against the branches: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again."

If the Jews abide not still in unbelief of Christianity, they shall be grafted into their own olive-tree,—which is not Judaism, for that was the "old covenant that was ready to vanish away," (Heb. viii. 13;) but it is the Christian church, in which we have

the fulfilment of the prophetic promises preached to Abraham. So soon as they believe with faithful Abraham, they will rejoice as he did to see the day of Christ, or will glory in him. The gospel being identical with the covenant of Abraham, shows that the latter has *not been essentially changed* and NEVER WILL BE ABROGATED. Ergo, Christianity is not a new church, but the completion of the promise, "*It shall bruise thy head,*" i.e. the seed of the woman (which seed is Christ) shall bruise the serpent's head; which holy, soul-animating truth, in its development, like the changing forms and colors of the opening flower, did assume different external aspects, but remained the same in its identity and character.

CHAPTER III.

THE IDENTITY OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT AND THE GOSPEL, CONTINUED.

It may be profitable, in the exhibition of this interesting subject, to notice some very striking analogies between the Abrahamic covenant and the gospel, which more especially demand our regard as they constitute a basis of the apostle's defence of Christianity.

1. The priesthood of the Abrahamic dispensation was the exact type of that of the gospel. "Jesus was made a high-priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Heb. vi. 20.

2. The faith of Abraham was justi-

fyng. So by the faith of Jesus Christ we are justified before God :—"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) Abraham was justified by faith without the deeds of the law, for it was before that ritual or ceremonial law was given. Even so are Christians justified without a conformity to that law, because it hath "vanished away."

3. The sacred courts of that temple in which the patriarch worshiped were open to his infant offspring, who were to be circumcised on the eighth day. Even so hath Christ declared, "Of such is the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God is the church of Christ, in which we have the "*confirmation of the promises made unto the fathers.*"

It would mar the beauty and excel-

lency of this kingdom to take away any of its essential features. It is true, there have been changes and substitutions, but no destruction of fundamental elements. Melchizedek no more fills the holy office of priest, but Christ has taken his place, and “abideth a priest forever” after his order or type. Circumcision has also yielded its place to holy baptism. But faith and justification, the kingdom itself and its subjects, all remain unaltered and unalterable. These things must of necessity be so, as God is infallible, “declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, *My counsel shall stand,*”—“*I am the Lord: I change not.*” It is a very gross error to suppose that God pulls down in one dispensation what he had reared up during a former one. This would be

like the conduct of erring man. But "the works of his hands are verity and judgment: all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness."

CHAPTER IV.

TO WHOM THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
APPERTAINS.

ACCORDING to the original wording of this covenant or charter, it appertains to and includes all believers, as Abraham and his children. "And God said to Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." Gen. xvii. 9-11.

That God included the natural infant seed of Abraham in this covenant admits of not the least doubt; and, though it might be contended that the covenant in which these children constituted a party only referred to the land of Canaan, which was guaranteed to them as "an everlasting possession," yet this view is radically defective. Circumcision was given to Abraham, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," which faith the Apostle Paul, yea, *even Christ himself*, referred to the present dispensation. (See John viii. 56, and Gal. iii. 6, 7.) To show that more than this land was included in the promise, I need but state that, had this been all, *we* could find no gospel in it, and but a small part of the human family could possibly enjoy it, much less the whole world. For though the land extend "from the

river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates," yet this whole territory would be small in comparison to the world, the whole of which is to be brought under the gospel's sanctifying influences. Mark xvi. 15.

Abraham through his Christian seed is the heir of the world, (*tau kosmou,*) and not simply Palestine. We are driven to this view of the subject, or else to convert the whole of the benefits of Christianity into the temporal possession of the earth. Christians have, it is true, "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," and were it not for "that which is to come," they of all men would be most miserable. Said an inspired apostle, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." By which it is understood that if the religion of Christ gave

hopes only of a little temporal possession, its possessors would be the most miserable or wretched people in the world. And this is certainly true; for many would toil for an inheritance never to be possessed; for, like the blessed Redeemer, "they have not where to lay their head." Neither would it be an everlasting possession to constitute the eternal life of the soul, were all the world their own.

But it may be asked, How could circumcision—a religious ordinance—be given, as a seal of the righteousness of faith, to any but adult believers? However inconsistent the circumcision of infants may appear, we know that God commanded it. The objector may urge that the seal should not be affixed till there is evidence of the existence of the thing sealed. Perhaps it will be well here to call the attention

of the reader to the language of inspiration touching this subject. In Romans iv. 11 we read, "And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a *seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had*," &c. It is not said that circumcision sealed his *faith*, but the RIGHTEOUSNESS of faith. It was God's token or sign that his faith was accepted as righteousness. *Faith* is one thing, and the *righteousness* of it is another thing. The latter, not the former, was sealed by circumcision. So baptism, standing in the place of circumcision, is now a *sign and seal of the righteousness of faith*, and not a seal of faith itself. Consistency necessarily impels me to this view; for, as baptism has most unquestionably taken the place of circumcision, it beyond all doubt answers the same purpose.

There is nothing, then, in the nature of the New Testament seal, any more

than in that of the Old Testament, forbidding its application to children. Moses does not tell us that Abraham's children on the eighth day had faith. There is no record of the fact that God informed him of the existence of such faith in his infant seed; yet they, as well as himself, were to be circumcised, were to receive the seal of the righteousness of faith,—thus reversing the order observed with reference to himself. He first believed, and afterwards received the seal; they were first to receive the sign or seal, and afterwards to be trained up in the faith.

This is God's method of propagating his church. It obviates the necessity of a direct revelation to each individual.*

* All our knowledge is either tuitive, intuitive, or revealed. By the fall our intuitive or innate knowledge of the true character of God and his worship was lost. Hence a revelation of God's

To let children grow up out of the church, in the world and sin, and when they are old, attempt to bring them under the influence of Christianity, is directly contrary to the order Christ has established in his kingdom on earth. Hence the extreme difficulty, and often impossibility, under ordinary human instrumentality, of reclaiming them at that advanced period of life. The slow progress of Christianity in heathen countries, and the thinly scattered few in all lands who are radically converted to God, prove beyond all gainsaying the indispensable necessity of early religious training.

will was necessary, and, as revelation has ceased since the sacred canon was completed, all men must now obtain their knowledge of divine things by tuition. Hence the Saviour's commission to his apostles, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20:—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c.

Men often set aside the command of God by interposing their own vain philosophy; deferring the religious education of their children, they say, until these little ones can understand the meaning of divine truth. Thus neglected, the poisonous seeds of sin soon overspread the heart, and so completely preoccupy the soul with evil habits in youth, as often to prevent any serious or lasting religious impression; and, instead of *understanding*, when they have arrived at the age of reason, their conscience is seared as with a hot iron, and they are past feeling and past concern.

To introduce the true religion into a heathen country, it has always been necessary to gain access to the minds of adults first, and then to bring in their children. It was customary among the Jews, when they received

converts from the heathen, first to circumcise those adults who professed faith in the God of Abraham, and afterwards to apply this seal to their children. See Ex. xii. 48, compared with Gen. xxxiv.

In accordance with this principle and practice, the apostles received and baptized whole families,—*e.g.* the jailer and his family, (Acts xvi.,) also Lydia and her family and the household of Stephanus, (1 Cor. i. 16,) Cornelius and his house, *i.e.* his family, (Acts x. 2–48,) and Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and all his house. Acts xviii. 8.

But I may be met with the following objection. Let these children alone till maturity or middle life,—because it would be unfair to take advantage of their tender minds before they are capable of acting for themselves. Now,

who does not know that it is utterly impossible to preserve the mind in a state of neutrality until maturity? It will take in sentiments, and the heart or moral faculties will be influenced by them. If, therefore, the prolific soil of the human heart be not productive of good, evil will inevitably spring up. This objection stands in direct opposition to the precepts of God; "and he that gathereth not with him scattereth abroad."

What sane man would not infinitely prefer that his child should have his mind preoccupied with religious sentiments, to the entire exclusion of every sinful thought, rather than risk the salvation of his soul upon the slender hope of an escape from the snare of sin after it has fixed its serpentine coils fast about his heart, and by its fatal

adder-like sting has benumbed all his refined and tender sensibilities?

Satan himself can scarcely desire greater advantage over the human race than to have the undisputed control of it during the eagerly susceptible period of childhood and youth; and perhaps no class of men have ever done him more effectual service than those who have opposed, in theory and practice, the religious training of children.

God requires his truths to be taught to children;* and, though we may not discover the wisdom of this divine regulation, (strange, however, that any should not discover it,) it should be altogether sufficient for our purpose to know that God requires us to *bring these little ones to him*. “YE FATHERS,”

* Deut. vi. 6, 7, iv. 9; Prov. xxii. 6; Eph. vi. 4.

said Paul to the Ephesians, (vi. 4,) "PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH, *but* BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD."

From the creation of the world till the advent of Jesus Christ, children had a divine right to the ordinances of religion, as is clearly shown in the sacred record. But it is insisted by some who even profess Christ, that under the gospel dispensation this privilege has been abolished,—that the terms of admission into the covenant of grace, as framed by Christ, necessarily exclude little children. It is inferred that, as infants cannot believe, they are rejected. The words of Christ,—Mark xvi. 16,—“He that believeth and is baptized,” &c., are regarded as conclusive upon this point. Thus it would appear that intelligent

men would attempt to make out a verdict of *infidelity* against those of whom the holy Jesus says, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father." (Matt. xviii. 10.) Let any man prove, if he can, that these "babes and sucklings" have "denied the Lord that bought them." Until this is done, the rule, "he that believeth not shall be damned," will not apply to them. Jesus said, "OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD." It is quite enough for our purpose to know this, and to understand what God requires us to do for our children, without inquiring *why* he hath thus ordained. *We do not stop to cavil at, or find fault with, but with all our heart approve ;* and, God being our helper, *we will never cease to advocate his method of grace, brought to light in the gospel preached to Abraham, and in these last days delivered to us by his Son Jesus Christ.*

We have found *when* and *how* God ordained infant membership in his church; and it will devolve upon those who oppose it to show *when* and *how* it was annulled.* “To the law and to the testimony,” ye witnesses of God: “if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Those who oppose the application of Christian baptism to infants and cut them off from the church and thereby prevent thousands of precious souls from the “grace of God that bringeth salvation,” and with an air of triumph ask, “Where is your ‘thus saith the

* The reader would do well to ponder this subject seriously. Remember that God has covenanted with an *oath* to such children this ecclesiastical privilege as an “everlasting inheritance.” See Gen. xvii. 7, xxii. 16–18; also Heb. vi. 13–25; Luke i. 72, 73.

Lord' for infant baptism?" must show a "thus saith the Lord" for the revocation of his "*everlasting covenant*," CONFIRMED BY HIS OATH, and for the exclusion of that very large class of our race, and by far the most innocent part, from their own legal inheritance. But there is *no* "thus saith the Lord" to exclude them from baptism, the divinely authorized seal of the covenant during the Christian dispensation. Then let them cease their opposition to God's appointment; for his word and promise will stand fast forever.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUBJECT OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER,
CONTINUED.

A PRIVILEGE once possessed and never withdrawn, still rightfully belongs to the original grantee. Children enjoyed church-membership by an expressed grant during the two former dispensations,—a period of nearly *two thousand years*. Nothing has been said, or even intimated, by the Saviour or his apostles about the abolition of this divine statute. Consequently, *we cannot avoid the conclusion* THAT IT STILL EXISTS. Even from the beginning, through the patriarchal age, when the church was found in the family, chil-

dren were members of it. Is it not, therefore, most unaccountable that, after infant membership had been established and perpetuated in the church from Adam to Christ, when he came to complete the system of redemption *this right was destroyed* WITHOUT A SINGLE WORD? To believe this is to believe contrary to evidence; for not only is there no record prohibitory of infant membership, but both the Old and New Testament contain numerous laws and precepts in its favor and absolutely requiring it.*

It has often been objected that those who have been baptized in infancy have not "believers' baptism," and therefore their baptism is null and

* Gen. xvii. 10; Deut. iv. 9, 10, vi. 5-7, xi. 18, 19, xxxi. 12, 13; Prov. xxii. 6; Matt. xix. 14; Eph. vi. 4.

void. I might reply that many adults baptized in their riper years are equally destitute of "believers' baptism," because many have confessed they were unconverted when they received this sacred ordinance; and numerous living examples of this fact are seen every day.

But I am aware that one error does not justify another; and had infant baptism no stronger support, I freely confess, it would rest upon a very slender prop. Therefore I do not attempt to vindicate it upon the ground that baptized unconverted adults have not believers' baptism, but I advocate it upon their own *everlasting covenant title*. For as long as the Abrahamic covenant stands,—and it will stand as long as the gospel or the doctrine of "*justification by faith*" shall exist,—so long they shall have this covenant right

to membership in the church. To say that their title has been annulled would be to say "the promise in Christ," given *four hundred and thirty years* before the law by Moses, has been destroyed. But that "promise" was the *gospel*. Will any one say that the gospel has been annulled? The Apostle Paul expressly declares the "*law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, CANNOT DISANNUL that it should make the PROMISE OF NONE EFFECT.*" (Gal. iii. 17.) "The law, therefore, was not against the promises," neither did Christ destroy them; but his gospel is the fulfilment of them. "Think not," said he, "that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I CAME NOT TO DESTROY, BUT TO FULFIL." Matt. v. 17.

The covenant with Abraham required him to circumcise his male issue on the eighth day. Now, as this

covenant, MADE FOR THE WORLD, still stands, these infants, the offspring of the seed or children of Abraham,—which all Christians are by faith in Christ Jesus,—are by covenant right claimed by the God of Abraham, and should be dedicated to him by baptism. The error into which our opponents have fallen, that none are to be baptized but those who give evidence of personal faith, is corrected by the Lord himself, who commanded Abraham to circumcise his son Isaac *on the eighth day*. How dare we, then, refuse to bring our infant seed unto the Lord? especially since we know that he commands us so to do, and as we know that if they are not trained up in the service of God they will become the servants of Satan. We should strive to preoccupy the hearts of our children with religious principles. Let

these strengthen with their growth to fortify them against temptation in riper years.

It was the desire to know evil as well as good that induced the first act of rebellion against God in the garden of Eden. Far better for us to know nothing of sin. But in a world deeply fallen, where

“Soon as we draw our vital breath
The seeds of sin grow up for death,”

we will learn more or less of the “depths of Satan,” without any effort to pry into the secret “mysteries of iniquity.” The overflowing flood of moral evil presses in upon us from every side with such gigantic force and tempest speed that with every warning and every counsel against it, yet many a hopeful youth as well as “man of strength” is swept away.

But would not sin be vastly diminished if *all parents and teachers* were *conscientiously faithful* in all their duty to those who are under their care, requiring them to “abstain from all appearance of evil,” and “training them up in the fear of the Lord”? It is not difficult to conceive that, if all adults could now be induced to begin to live *in earnest* the life of Christians, should become honest, truth-loving, benevolent, church-going, praying people, in *all things* “adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour by a holy walk and godly conversation,” the rising generation could and would be restrained from sin by the fear of God. The “*beauty of holiness*” would charm their souls; and, having no one to set them an evil example or tempt them to sin, they would be “shut up unto the faith of Christ,” and would scarcely

be able to “resist” the power of divine truth so uniformly and so universally exemplified. Neither is this mere theory, that never can be reduced to practice, but what God requires of all.

God commands in his word, saying, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Now, this is either true or untrue. If it is not true, God’s word is false,—at least, in this one particular. But God’s word is not false: therefore, if children are brought up in the way they should go, “when they are old they will not depart from it.” Let no one pronounce against the word of the Lord, therefore, until by a faithful test it shall be found defective. Let every mouth be stopped on this subject, for there is not a nation or city, yea, but very few families, who

in all things "train their children in the way they should go."

But, it may be asked, why is it that the children of pious parents, even of ministers, sometimes become profligates? It should be remembered that many professing Christians so annul all their profession by open sin or neglect of religious duty, as to fix the impression upon the minds of their children that they are the veriest hypocrites. Not a few, though not denominated "wicked," neglect the church, the prayer-meeting, the Sunday-school, and family prayer. Such examples will drive the reflecting mind away from God, rather than draw it unto Christ. Some indulge in highly improper language, and give evidence of the existence of a temper or spirit unsubdued to the "meekness and gentleness of Christ." Let not such

parents be astonished to see their children growing up in sin and turning to open infidelity, and let not inspiration be charged with falsehood; but let the blame rest where it properly belongs,—*upon the evil training of such children* and INDULGING THEM IN SIN.

Take the case of Eli, whose sons “made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.” (1 Sam. iii. 13.) The family discipline often amounts to nothing more than, “Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons: for it is no good report that I hear.” God has given authority for good to the father over his son; and if he neglects or refuses to exercise it, he sins against his Maker, and destroys his own peace of mind, and ministers to the eternal infamy and ruin of his child. Parents must not only admon-

ish with a "Nay, my sons," but positively "restrain" them from their vileness.

But inconsistent parental example is not the only cause of the aberrations of children; for even where there is a comparatively pure moral atmosphere encircling the domestic fireside, all around without may be, and frequently is, highly pestilential. Your child cannot walk your streets, or associate with the aged or the young in the field, the workshop, or the college, without coming in contact with obscenity and blasphemy. Here are those who do not mention the name of the Lord except to blaspheme; and if perchance the son of a pious father fall into the pit they have prepared for him, forthwith it is charged to the hypocrisy of the professor of religion, or to the alleged falsehood of the Bible; but "there is

no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord." Wicked men labor to cause the professor of religion to "deny the Lord" by evil works, and, having succeeded, instead of charging it to themselves, God and his holy word are blamed; but verily such persons "shall not stand in the judgment."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DURATION OF THE ABRAHAMIC
COVENANT.

GOD promised Abraham, saying, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." (Gen. xvii. 7.) And with regard to the perpetuity of Christianity, there can be no doubt. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," said Isaiah, (ix. 7,) and Daniel (ii. 44) declared, "In the days of these kings [those represented by the toes of the image] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom *which shall*

never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and IT SHALL STAND FOREVER." Also in vii. 14, the same prophet said, "there was given him [who came in the clouds of heaven] dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The Apostle Peter exhorts "those who had obtained like precious faith to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, that an entrance might be ministered unto them abundantly into the *everlasting kingdom* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This kingdom or church shall neither be given to other people nor destroyed here on earth, nor

shall the "great salvation" ever cease to be "the joy" of the redeemed. "The righteous shall go away into life eternal." Matt. xxv. 46.

It does not invalidate the argument for the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant to behold "Israel after the flesh" dispersed over all the world. Though they have long since been expelled their country, this does not prove that it was not covenanted to them for an everlasting possession, or that the original charter to that land has been revoked. It is still their own land, to which they will again be restored as soon as they repent of the crime for which they were driven out among the Gentiles. They were taken captive to Babylon for idolatry; but as soon as they repented they were restored to their beloved Jerusalem and the country of their fathers. Since

that time they have abhorred idols, and acknowledged no other God but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now for eighteen centuries they have wandered in distant lands. Their night has been long and dreary; but they begin to inquire, "Watchman, what of the night?" The time may not be very distant when "the morning cometh." There appears to be unquestionable prophetic evidence that they shall again come to their long-deserted home. In Leviticus 26th chapter, they have the rule by which God will regulate his dealings towards them in all such cases. "If when they are in their enemies' lands they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abra-

ham will I remember, and I will remember the land." The writer entertains the opinion that their conversion to Christianity will synchronize with their restoration. See Jer. iii. 17, 18, and Zech. xii. entire; but especially the tenth verse, which reads:—"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and *they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.*"

We have seen that their idolatry drove them into Babylon, and their repentance was speedily followed by their restoration. But they have not yet "LOOKED UPON HIM WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED," nor "*mourned*" in "*bitterness*" for him; yet, when they do,

"GOD WILL REMEMBER HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, *and he* WILL REMEMBER THE LAND." See also Hosea iii. 4, 5. They shall forsake their false worship and seek the Lord, (Christ,) and shall obey the Messiah, the son of David their king. Then will their longest and most melancholy night have terminated forever.

But, though they should never be restored to their own country, they will, if they remain not in unbelief, be grafted into their own good olive-tree, which is Christianity. This is a subject of lively interest, because it is one of prophecy. See Rev. vii.; compare with Jer. iii. 17, 18, and Romans the eleventh chapter.

The present signs of the times seem to indicate that a remarkable epoch in their history is near. May that glorious day be hastened in its coming

when Gentile and Jew, when all, shall meet in pure devotion at *His* feet who is "the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke ii. 32.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS TO STAND FOREVER. It is to break in pieces and bruise. The little stone cut out of the mountain without hands has been breaking in pieces "the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold," making them "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors," and the stone has already become a "great mountain" and is rapidly "filling the whole earth." Mark its gigantic strides in the East during the last few years.* The Ottoman throne,

* It may be worthy of remark that, according to the prophetic order of the destruction of the image, the golden head is the last. The little stone began by smiting the image on its feet, which I understand to be the Roman empire,

that once struck terror into the very heart of the most powerful empires, has wellnigh crumbled to dust. The East Indies have given way; and the "Celestial Empire" has thrown her gates wide open to the car of the conquering "Jesus of Nazareth." His kingdom "shall not be left to other people," neither will any other church or kingdom supplant it, as it has supplanted and is still supplanting the

(the church never made any determined aggressive movements for the conversion of the Gentiles till Christ commissioned his disciples for this great work;) and at this time it is accomplishing the destruction of those empires originally embraced in the Chaldean monarchy, or which have grown up out of it and partake, more or less, of its spirit. The golden head will be broken in pieces and scattered "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors,"—just as all the other parts of the image have been.

systems of heathen idolatry, and will finally "root up every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted." Matt. xv. 13.

Science, falsely so called, once reared its towering walls, Babel-like, to the heavens against the gospel; but all the arguments drawn from a misapplication of scientific truth, like ice-bergs under a tropic sun, are fast melting away and disappearing before the effulgent light of the Sun of Righteousness. The doctrine of miracles, so long and so stoutly denied by the whole infidel corps, has fought and conquered. The genuineness and authenticity of the inspired Scriptures, so often called in question, are seldom now denied by men whose intelligence entitles them to high respect; and the unity of the human race, so virulently

assailed, has come off from the field of contest with brilliant colors.

Infidelity, like the solar or lunar cycle, terminating at the beginning, has almost completed its entire revolution through all its phases. It has nearly passed through every constellation of the spiritual and religious heavens; and though it might, like those heavenly orbs, begin anew to tread the beaten way, yet this would be fruitless labor. It has been driven already from every point that held out encouraging hopes of success; and men of literary ability will no longer labor and spend their strength for that which satisfieth not, but which subjects them to ignominy and contempt.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM HAS TAKEN THE
PLACE OF CIRCUMCISION.

THE sign or seal of this covenant under the Abrahamic dispensation was circumcision, but under the Christian age is baptism, which has taken the place of the former.

I observe here, once for all, That all essential doctrines and usages in the former dispensations, not prophetic or typical, have either given place to others better calculated to answer the object contemplated now, since the gospel is offered to "all people," or have been transmitted to the present economy.

It will be readily admitted that baptism is a more appropriate ordinance than circumcision, embracing both male and female subjects in its application. But it may be incumbent upon me here to show, 1st, The religious character of circumcision, and, 2d, The substitution of baptism under this dispensation.

That circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of Abraham's religious faith, may be shown by reference to Romans, 4th chapter, 11th and 12th verses:—"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not

of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had yet being uncircumcised." To deny that Abraham's faith was a true religious faith, is to contradict the apostle's argument. For if it was nothing more than the confidence of a general that he should gain a victory and possess the country of his enemy, how could he be styled "*the father of all them that believe*"? and how could "righteousness be imputed unto them also"? He is the father, pattern, or example of "*all them that believe*;" but this he could not be if those believers referred to have a faith in any radical part different from his own. This true gospel faith (let it not be forgotten the gospel was preached to Abraham, and he believed it) "was accounted to him for righteousness," and his righteous-

ness was sealed by circumcision. And, further, circumcision had a direct reference to man's moral nature. Hence the precept, "*Circumcise the foreskin of your heart,*" (Deut. x. 16,) and, "*The Lord will circumcise thy heart,*" (xxx. 6.) The Apostle Paul, who must have understood the import of this ordinance, in Romans ii. 29 hath declared, "*Circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit.*" We understand him to teach that circumcision signified a spiritual cleansing, or the cutting off of all sin from the soul. And does not baptism import the same thing? Peter declares, "The baptism which saves us is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. iii. 21.) The outward washing or "putting away of the filth of the flesh" could

not save the soul, but this divine ordinance, like circumcision, teaches the necessity of such a “purifying of the heart by faith” as is fitly emblemized by “garments white and clean.”

Speaking of the Christian church, the Apostle Paul said, “We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil. iii. 3.) To the Colossians he wrote, “Ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power: *in whom also ye are CIRCUMCISED* with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh *BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST*; buried with him in baptism, whence also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” There is no room to doubt that the “*circumcision made without hands*”

and the "*circumcision of Christ*" mean *baptism*. But, to prevent all possible mistake, he immediately adds, "Buried with him in *baptism*;" and, further, "You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Col. ii. 13.

In baptism, therefore, we have *promised* to us all the same spiritual blessings which were covenanted to Abraham and his seed.

In the Acts of the Apostles, xxi. 21, we find it recorded of the Apostle Paul, that he taught all the Jews "that they ought not to circumcise their children;" and in his letter to the "churches of Galatia," (v. 2,) he says, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Here, then, we have inspired authority

for the abolition of circumcision; and if baptism has not supplied its place we have nothing to answer that purpose. But that *baptism* IS THE CHRISTIAN CIRCUMCISION, no man with the New Testament in his hands can rationally doubt.

It has often been controverted whether baptism is necessary to salvation. The law of God concerning circumcision was, "The uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant." Now, though this excision from his people may not have included the loss of the soul, yet we know that such neglect on the part of the parent was highly displeasing to God. Does any one say that in both cases—viz., circumcision and baptism—it could only result in the separa-

tion of the individual from all ecclesiastical relation to God's people? Yet is such exclusion harmless to the soul? Can we trifle with divine ordinances with impunity? Has God instituted any that are unmeaning and useless? A man, in the pride of his heart, may say, as many have said, the church, and the ministry, and reading the divine word, and prayer, and repentance, and faith, can all be laid aside in perfect safety. We know that many do "refuse" all these, and "rebel," affecting to be wiser than God; but is not the result fatal? Admitting that the "baptism which saves us is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh," does this destroy its necessity? Men may say truly that going to church will not save them; yet "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word;" and who does not know

that converts from the ranks of those who neither read nor hear the word of God are as few and far between as angels' visits?

Baptism is a necessary ordinance, just as the gospel ministry is a necessary institution, yea, as the church itself is necessary. As a seal of the righteousness of faith, it becomes a teacher, showing the necessity of righteousness. It points out in the clearest symbolic language the purification of the soul. Our Liturgy declares, "As water cleanses our bodies from natural pollution, so the Holy Spirit only can purify our souls from the defilements of sin." And this spiritual cleansing is signified in baptism. By it we are visibly separated or cut off from the world; and if "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," "have put off the old man with his

deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," and "have been all made to drink into one spirit," then are we "new creatures in Christ Jesus," we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS REQUIRED TO BRING
THEIR INFANT SEED TO CHRIST IN
BAPTISM.

IF baptism fills the place of circumcision, has the same religious significance, brings us under the same obligations, and if, like that seal, it includes ourselves and our children,—which it certainly does,—our unavoidable conclusion is, that it is sinful in a high degree to “*forbid our children to come*” or prevent them from being “brought to Christ.”

There is, evidently, a tacit consent that children belong to the church of

Christ, found in his own declarations and in the writings of the apostles. "They brought unto him also infants, that he should put his hands on them and pray; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. *But when Jesus saw it HE WAS MUCH DISPLEASED, and said unto them, SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME, AND FORBID THEM NOT; FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.*" (Mark x. 13-15; Luke xviii. 15-17. "The promise is to you and your children," said Peter, (Acts ii. 39.) To this same Peter, who was one of the disciples that rebuked those who brought infants to Christ for his blessing, he said, when delivering his last special command, "FEED MY LAMBS."

Now, when we remember that *neither Peter nor any other man had ever seen a church of God in which there were no children, (lambs,)* to what conclusion *could we come*, but that Christ intended these little children, for whose spiritual interest he felt such prayerful solicitude, should still be connected with his church, AS THEY EVER HAD BEEN, and would require the continued attention of Peter and all others whom God should appoint as overseers to feed the flock of God?

I have intimated that a *prohibition* should have been given if they were not to be continued in the church. Such prohibition was of vital importance to the purity of the gospel kingdom, if children had no place therein; because Christianity was first preached among Jews, who were accustomed to see "*lambs*" in the flock.

A further proof is derived from the fact that in his inimitable sermon on the mount, Christ passed over infant membership in *perfect silence*. I feel the *utmost confidence*, therefore, that JESUS OF NAZARETH not only gave no prohibition, and intended that none should be given, to infant membership in his kingdom, but every encouragement to its *uninterrupted continuance therein*. Indeed, it was simply *impossible* to *prohibit* it *without* a PALPABLE CONTRADICTION of an *institution* AS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AS THE OATH of the IMMUTABLE JEHOVAH COULD MAKE IT.*

Infant baptism is spoken of by its opponents as the “great apostasy” and the

* What need was there, then, that a new command should be issued, as their membership was an established fact, that needed no such precept to enforce it?

“curse of the church;” it is indignantly styled “baby-sprinkling.” Strange that Jesus Christ did not foresee this “curse” and lift up his warning voice against it. He could easily have said, “Ye have heard it said by them of old time,” (Abraham and Moses,) “Circumcise every man-child in all your generations,”—fix the seal of God’s everlasting covenant upon them; “but I say unto you, it shall not be so among you,”—infant children have henceforth and forever no place in my kingdom. But this he did not say, nor any other words equivalent thereto.

But if I have succeeded in showing that Christianity is the full development of the covenant made with Abraham, that the Christian faith is essentially the same faith as that of this patriarch, that children have church-membership secured to them by a cove-

nant confirmed by the oath of God, that believers with their infant offspring sustain the very same relation to the gospel church now that believing Abraham and his infant seed sustained to the same church when the gospel was preached to him, those who advocate the baptism of their children, I trust, will not appear, in the eyes of enlightened Bible-readers and Bible-Christians, as so unpardonably heretical, after all.

Does any one doubt that it is displeasing to God to see children grow up in sin, without that special, earnest, prayerful training he requires? But I may be answered, The religious training of children does not include baptism. *Yet they are to be trained up in the way they should go. In what way is that? Is it OUT OF or IN the church? If they should go forward through the*

pilgrimage of life without baptism and without any union or communion with God's people, then let them be so trained up, for when they are old they will still be found in this way. Multitudes have been thus trained, and in them the old adage is continually verified:—"As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

But we all know that the world is not the path to heaven. How, then, can that pious father who "walks with God" bar the door of God's grace against his own tender offspring? Does he not know that God required the seal of the covenant to be applied to children eight days old?

But it has often been said that "children are not proper subjects of baptism, and not fit for the church." Nay, but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God? Will you take

upon yourself to tell God that the thing which he commanded to be done is most offensive to him? Let man be dumb, and let Jehovah speak for himself, and let every one of us be "swift to hear." Jesus says, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God.*" They belong to the kingdom of God according to the decision of the eternal Judge himself, from whom there can be no appeal.

By the logic of our opponents I can prove the necessity of this duty. They insist that no one can come to Christ without baptism ; but *Christ requires little children to come to him : therefore they must be baptized.** Are there any

* The *mode of baptism* does not necessarily belong to this discussion. I have, therefore, said nothing on that subject. For information

who "FORBID" these little ones to go to Christ? The Master doth not forbid them; and his disciples dare not, lest they fall under his righteous displeasure.

But the objector may say he cannot understand how a seal of the righteousness of faith can be applied to an infant. Perhaps he could not have *understood* this subject if he had lived nearly *forty centuries ago*. Abraham may not

on that question I refer my readers to Dr. B. Kurtz's work on "Infant Baptism," and Dr. J. A. Seiss's "Baptist System Examined."

I entertain a thorough conviction that pouring or sprinkling is the mode of applying water in baptism; for no other could possibly symbolize or be analogous to the application of the Spirit which always *descends* upon the subject.

A more vital question than the simple *mode* of baptism has been my theme. Neither have I travelled out of the record for argument to sustain my position.

have fully comprehended it himself; but *he believed God*, and “it was imputed to him for righteousness,” for his faith led him to active obedience. He did not stop to say, O God, Isaac is but an infant of eight days old: he cannot comprehend the import of this ordinance: therefore, I beseech thee, let him tarry in his mother’s tent until he is of age to make a covenant with thee for himself. This would have been infidelity and open rebellion then; and can it be any thing less now, to refuse to “*walk in the steps of our father Abraham*”?

The church of Christ is the same from which the Jews by unbelief were expelled, (Rom. xi. 24,) and into which they may be grafted by faith in the Messiah.

The descendants of Abraham always saw children in the church of the God

of Abraham. Is it likely that they would recognise Christianity as that church, if this feature should be wanting?

The church is spoken of under the similitude of a fig-tree, the nature of which is to have a young crop growing up to maturity whilst the more advanced are ripening and disappearing.

I have proved that *little infant children* have a covenanted title to church-membership. We therefore need not disturb ourselves with the question whether they have faith. As they possess a fitness for the kingdom of God, according to the decision of Jesus Christ himself, as God has sanctified them or made them fit for his church, and requires them to be in it, and says that his kingdom is composed of such, what decree of men or angels can undo it? and by what authority

can any man pronounce them “unfit for baptism”? But if some men believe not, “shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” Nay, verily, “Let God be true, but every man a liar, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

CHAPTER IX.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

Objection.—“THERE is a distinction made in the Bible between the gospel preached in *promise* and the gospel preached in *fact*. The gospel may be preached in promise, and may be believed in promise, without being understood. The language of the Almighty to Abraham is a *promise*; the death of Christ is the accomplishment of that promise in *fact*, &c.

Answer.—There are but two points in this objection. Let us notice them.

1. The gospel preached in promise.
2. The nature of the faith exercised.

“Gospel” literally means good news. It was good news to Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But what was this good news especially? Answer:—Salvation from sin. “It [the seed of the woman] shall bruise thy head.” Did all those who died in the faith before the advent of Christ enjoy this salvation? Will any one say they did not? Now, when the gospel is preached “*in fact*,” has it not the same effect? This good news has ever been, as it is yet, “the gospel of salvation” to all who believe. Rom. i. 16; Eph. i. 13.

But the gospel embraces the whole subject of redemption, the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Was Abraham a believer of the gospel? No one will say he was not. Why, then, make a “flourish of trumpets” simply to produce confusion? Why

labor so hard to draw a line of distinction where there is no essential difference?

The objector should not press his argument, lest it might result in his own undoing; for he might find, to his utter consternation, *no church* "in fact," *no justification* "in fact," and *no salvation* "in fact," known to Abraham or any of the Old Testament saints.

Faith is defined to be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) Let the objector examine this eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and, when he rises from the task, point out, if he can, the *difference* between the faith of those "holy men of God" and that of Christians, and show, if there is a difference, how mistaken Paul was when he referred to them

as illustrations of that faith he had just defined.

True, it is said, "They all died in the faith, not having received the promises,"—by which is evidently intended the advent of Christ, in whom God had promised to bless all nations. They lived not to see *that promise fulfilled*, "*but saw it afar off, and were persuaded of it, and embraced it.*" (Heb. xi. 13.) They lived by faith in "the seed of the woman," the "seed of Abraham," Christ. So do we. "The life which I now live in the flesh," said Paul, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. ii. 20.) The saints of olden time "endured as seeing him who is invisible," realizing the salvation through Jesus Christ (Heb. vi. 15) as fully as Christians do, who also "endure as seeing him who is invisible," who "see through a glass darkly." And,

having no continuing city here, they
“seek one to come.” “For there remaineth a rest unto the people of God.”

“’Tis by the faith of joys to come
We walk through deserts dark as night;
Till we arrive at heaven our home,
Faith is our guide and faith our light.

“The want of sight she well supplies;
She makes the pearly gates appear;
Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near.

“So Abram, by divine command,
Left his own house to walk with God;
His faith beheld the promised land,
And fired his zeal along the road.”

CHAPTER X.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

THE relation which the infant seed of believers sustain to the church has been, it is hoped, clearly and satisfactorily defined in the foregoing chapters. Yet the inquiry may arise, What is the condition of the infant offspring of unbelievers? I answer, They are excluded from all those blessings applicable to them through the Abrahamic covenant in the visible church, briefly comprehended in a godly example and faithful religious training. This will appear at a glance to every reflecting mind. The infidel or unbelieving

parent inculcates his own atheistic or deistic sentiments upon the expanding mind of his child. The Bible is derided as a cunningly-devised fable, or denounced as a system of abominable priestcraft. The hope of immortality is treated as a dream, and all religion regarded as a bubble. With such an example and such teaching, it would be marvellous if the confiding and submissive son should not become an infidel too. When the church, in the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, was troubled and rent by heretical teachers, each gave his own impress to his party or sect; and when, finally, a large portion in Asia and Africa apostatized, adopting the doctrines of the false prophet of Mecca, their offspring grew up in the belief of Mohammedanism. The Universalist imprints his peculiar views upon the mind of his

child, and the little boy grows up in the same belief. Can any one fail to see how parental example and teaching mould the religious mind, as well as form, in a great degree, the general character of children, and, in multitudes of instances, fix their destiny for time and eternity? It is often urged by the son as a sufficient reason for his conduct, that his father did the same things. Many want no higher authority than parental example and the precepts of the fathers, and will admit no other. In this way error has been propagated from generation to generation, deepening and widening in its course, so that sentiments at first merely *tolerated* finally were regarded as of vital importance. *E.g.* "*The Immaculate Conception of Mary*," but recently made an article of faith by the present pope, Pius IX. A further illustration is

found in the history of a long succession of idolatrous kings of Israel who followed the example of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. It is quite common to find certain family connections out of the church whose ancestors all, or nearly all, back to a very remote period, thus lived and died. Philosophers may affect to see the reason of this in their peculiar cast of mind; but God has discovered the true reason in a wicked, or at least in a very defective moral and religious, education. And therefore, to guard against this great evil, he requires that children shall be "trained up in the way they should go" from their infancy. What a fearful doom awaits unbelieving parents who despise the only "Lord that bought them," and perish in their sins, and drag down a long list of immortal souls after them

to the same eternal perdition ! Truly, better would it have been for such had they not been born.

But it may be asked, Will such children all be lost through the unbelief of their parents ? Answer : The salvation of the souls of children dying in infancy does not depend upon the faith of the parents, nor will they be lost on account of the infidelity of their fathers ; but they are saved upon the merit of the atonement of Jesus Christ, who has removed the condemnation consequent upon original sin. Hence no soul will be lost without actual transgression. I refer the reader to Romans v. 14-19, and Hebrews ii. 9, as proof that Christ tasted or suffered death for every man, and that his atonement provides not only for the pardon of original sin, of which we are assured in the promised resur-

rection, but also for the remission of "many offences:" *i.e.* death reigns by one, or in consequence of one, sin, "for the judgment was by one [sin] unto condemnation, but the free gift is of [or relates to] many offences unto justification," (ver. 16.) My conception of the doctrine here taught is this. Christ atones for all sin, original and actual. All mankind, viewed in Adam, in whom they sinned, have pardon granted; therefore shall *all* have a resurrection, which must necessarily be to an eternally happy state, unless the deeds done in the body shall interpose a barrier to their felicity. But all unforgiven sin—*i.e.* all wilful sin not repented of, and, of course, not forgiven—will be such a bar against heavenly enjoyment. Hence the necessity of repentance and faith in order to the forgiveness of actual or wilful sin.

According to this view, all infants, everywhere, dying before the period of accountability, and consequently before God charges them with actual sin, are saved. But the great evil of wicked example in parents and teachers is seen and felt in the case of those who are reared up under such influence; for often the child becomes habituated to evil ways before it is conscious of their sinfulness.

Responsibility begins with consciousness of right and wrong; yet much of that child's wicked conduct after the period of volition is attributable to his parents, inasmuch as they gave him this evil impetus and thus became partakers of the sins of their offspring. Were it not for a wholesome counter-acting influence, either through the word of God read or heard, or through the example and precepts of the pious,

not only the children of unbelievers would grow up and remain infidels, but all others would be in the same condition. It is the "entrance of God's word that giveth light," the "light of life;" but the gloomy shades of death hang as a pall over all lands and all souls where this heavenly illumination hath not penetrated.

Christianity is the only true light that is to "enlighten every man that cometh into the world;" and, whilst the Saviour commands parents to yield themselves and their children to his service in his church, and promises to withhold no good thing from the obedient, those who refuse and rebel shall be cut off. The curse of God is seen in the family of the ungodly man, whose children grow up in open vice. Therefore, let all parents lay this to heart; let them know and feel their re-

sponsibility to God for the influence they exert upon their children. Let them never forget that they are sowing seed in a fertile field, which will yield an abundant harvest for eternity in kind with the character of the seed sown.

Parents are God's guardians, who are required to rear up for him a godly seed in the church upon earth. He has furnished them every requisite means to this holy end, giving them the benefit of his own high authority to enforce his truth and secure obedience. But let them not suppose that precept without example will lead the expanding, inquiring mind to God. Long experience proves that example is much the more effectual teacher. *Practise your precepts.* Go in and out before your children in the fear and reverence of God. Let them see and

know that his word is the rule of your conduct.* Then may you hope to accomplish in some degree the great work assigned you, and be prepared to give a good account of your stewardship.

Christian parents, it is time to awake out of sleep; for, behold, the true light now shines so clearly that even those who are most blindly prejudiced against infant membership in the church and the religious education of children, begin to feel their responsibility to God on this momentous subject. Let

* The reader may possibly object to this opinion: that children may have a pious example and religious training by parents out of the church. But this is not conceded. No parent out of the church can possibly set a consistent, pious example to his children, because it is a part of his religious duty to belong to the church; and, though he may urge or counsel them to "walk in the law of the Lord," his example annuls his precepts.

your light shine around you in your family circle. Teach your children their relation to the church of God, and their duty to him. If your little ones with yourselves bear the seal of the covenant of Jehovah, with you they stand connected with his people; they are infant members of the same great ecclesiastical family, and are to be regarded and treated as such. You are their guardians. Then take prayerful care of your spiritual wards; put out on the highest interest every part of their Christian inheritance, that they may become enriched in "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

If you are out of the church with your children, God calls you as he did Abraham, not by revelation, but by his holy gospel, from the land of your nativity to a "better country," and

commands you and your "little ones" to receive the sign of Christian circumcision, which is baptism, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," that in Christ ye may become "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

"I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

THE END.



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